# Minutes of the Twenty First Meeting of the Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council

**Venue:F**itzwilliam Hotel, Dublin.

Date: 12th July 2006.

Present: P Fottrell (Chairman), K Kinsella (IFA), B Bent (WSPCA), M A Bartlett (CIWF), D Sparrow (Vet. Ireland), M Blake (DAF), S O’Laoide (Vet. Ireland), L McCabe (ICMSA), T O’Donnell (DAF), A Hanlon (UCD), A McCarthy (ISPCA), J Bryan (IFA), TJ Flanagan (ICOS), S Foley (CILDEHS).

**Apologies:** C Connor, (DARDNI), B Earley (TEAGASC), T Doyle (ICOS) represented byTJ Flanagan, R Kennedy (IFA).

**Secretary:** T O’Halloran.

Chairman welcomed all members.

# PRESENTATION ON THE FARM ANIMAL WELFARE COUNCIL, UK

Members received a presentation from Professor Christopher Wathes, Chairman of the above Council. A question and answer session followed. Copy of power-point presentation together with copies of other reports referred to by Prof. Wathes to be circulated to all members. **MINUTES**

Minutes adopted with 1 amendment.

# MATTERS ARISING

***Ritual Slaughter***

Chair of this subgroup said that following a meeting with the Islamic Cultural Centre Dublin, it was agreed to visit a lamb slaughtering plant to observe the use of a Stunning Assurance Monitor. The proposed plant however had closed down before the visit could take place. As it was the only approved plant of its type, Chair stated that he was now engaging with the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) to identify an export plant that might be agreeable to facilitate such an arrangement. He is hoping for an early result.

CIWF enquired if they could accompany the party visiting the plant. Chairman stated that this was a matter for the Chair however it is envisaged that only 1 or 2 people will visit plant.

***Marauding Dogs***

IFA enquired if letter had issued to the Minister for Agriculture and Food. Secretary confirmed that it had and will circulate reply when received from Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Veterinary Ireland representative suggested that farmers have a portion of the solution themselves i.e. neuter/spay their dogs. ***Exotic Birds***

At the last meeting, DAF had agreed to investigate a newspaper report regarding the import of exotic birds. DAF outlined the outcome of their investigations stating that they found no evidence of any birds dying in transit. ISPCA requested that exotic animal legislation remain on the 2006 Programme.

***Electro-Immobilisation (EI)***

CIWF expressed concern about an article published recently in the Irish Farmers Journal calling for a deferral of the proposed ban. DAF replied that there is no indication within the Department that the decision will be changed. IFA explained that veterinary practioners are approaching IFA expressing concern about the ban and that this is what has generated the publicity. Vet. Irl. representative stated that due to poor holding facilities on a number of farms, some veterinary practioners view it as a health and safety issue for both vets and farmers.

It was agreed to write to Chairman of Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare to request if EI Report could be made public.

***CIWF link to FAWAC Webpage***

It was agreed that CIWF could put a link from their webpage to that of FAWAC webpage.

# FARM ANIMAL WELFARE EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Chair of this subgroup reported that three meetings were held since Council last met. The Broiler welfare ‘best practice’ document is awaiting outcome of EC discussions and cannot be progressed. CIWF wanted it noted that they are opposed to this publication. With regard to de-horning/skulling, the group discussed the possibility of introducing polled breeds and had received presentations from the Irish Cattle Breeders’ Federation on genetics and from the National Cattle Breeding Centre on artificial insemination. It was agreed that Chairman would write to the Minister recommending:

1. an affective media awareness campaign to disbud calves early,
2. access to required veterinary medicines,
3. incentive scheme for farmers to upgrade on-farm animal restraints,
4. financial support for research into area of polled breeding.

DAF confirmed that these matters are being looked at present.

Other areas currently being looked at by the subgroup, include on-farm emergency and casual slaughter of animals. Subgroup feels that there is a need to produce guidelines for this area and Chair confirmed that Vet. Irl. is engaging with DAF regarding draft guidelines for veterinary practioners. Chair feels that there is also a need for IFA to engage with meat industry concerning acceptance by factories of causality animals. IFA agreed to discuss the matter with Chair.

With regard to the work programme of the subgroup, Chair said that they also intend to look at animal transport in general terms. CIWF enquired if they could be on the group for transport? Chairman said group is a matter for the Chair however any member of Council can make a submission to the subgroup.

DAF to confirm what latest position is re. EU Broiler Directive.

# WORKING GROUP ON CO-OPERATION (EWS)

Chair of this subgroup reported that following discussions at regional meetings a view emerged that there was a need to engage with other agencies such as Private Veterinary Practioners, An Garda Síochána and the Local Authority Veterinary Services. The Steering group convened a meeting with representatives from each of these organisations with the view to developing a means of local engagement i.e. having a dedicated Garda representative in each county with whom EWS could liaise with. The Gardaí are taking an active role and have requested a further meeting to progress the matter.

Chair also reported that contact had been made with the Health Service Executive (HSE) regarding provision of assistance in situations where there might be social problems, however there is no dedicated service on a national/regional basis. The view coming from regional EWS meetings is that farmers could resent HSE involvement and it is felt that involvement of a family member would prove more beneficial.

EWS has run into teething problems in two counties however all parties are working hard to resolve this before the next winter period.

# TRANSPORT

DAF reported that the new transport regulations come into effect on 1 January 2007. Consultation with stakeholders had taken place and replies received are currently being evaluated. The matter of training is also being addressed.

IFA and ICOS both stated that the training module needs to be balanced – it should not act as a disincentive. CILDEHS stated that training would need to progress by September at the latest given the start date of 1st January 2007.

CIWF expressed concern that route plans might not be strictly adhered to by transporters and enquired if DAF could confirm in advance if bookings at staging posts have been made? DAF confirmed that route plans are checked regarding viability of operation.

# FUR FARMING (SLAUGHTER OF MINK AND FOXES)

CIWF gave a presentation to Council taking into consideration replies received to date by them from DAF in response to requests for information. CIWF expressed serious concerns about slaughter methods and regulation and outlined some improvements that might be made in the interim including veterinary supervision at time of slaughter in fur plants. It was agreed that CIWF would put together a paper for circulation to Council.

It was suggested that the Education subgroup could put together a best practice for the fur industry.

At IFA suggestion, it was agreed that Secretary would contact a number of Scandinavian countries (who are perceived as pro-welfare and have an established fur industry) to determine what practices are in place there and also to give Council a European context.

It was agreed that this would be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

# EMERGENCY SLAUGHTER – AVIAN FLU

CIWF stated that it had been suggested by DAF that a video showing a trial emergency slaughter of birds, as would happen in the event of an outbreak of Avian Flu in Ireland, would be made available at this meeting. DAF replied that an evaluation of the process is still ongoing and is not yet completed. It should be ready for the next meeting.

CIWF enquired what DAF’s policy is re. ventilation shut-down. DAF confirmed that they would have a reply for the next meeting. Vet. Irl. is of the belief that Council should have a view on ‘Principle Shut-down’ of animal housing which is a highly undesirable method of slaughter. CIWF and ISPCA agreed with this point. It was agreed that A Hanlon,

D Sparrow, M Blake and possibly CIWF would discuss and prepare a paper for Council.

# A O B

Pink Veal

CIWF enquired about an article in the Irish Farmers Journal on Pink Veal production in Ireland. IFA advised that they had the report and would get it to Council. IFA confirmed that work with Teagasc is ongoing.

CIWF Publication

CIWF informed Council about the launch of a new publication by them entitled ‘Recognising the Sentience of Farm Animals’ and also a paper ‘Agriculture Practice Re. Pig Production’.

Halal Slaughter

CIWF enquired what happened to meat from animals killed by the Halal method, particularly that which is not consumed by the religious communities? Does it go into the regular food chain? CIWF are of the view that Halal meat should be identified with a specific label.

Vet. Irl. stated that this was discussed at FVE and agreed to get more information on this for Council.

Programme for 2006

IFA stated that welfare is an economic issue – there is a welfare/price link and this should be put on the agenda. It was agreed that this would be looked at and that perhaps Council could engage with FAWC UK.

Secretary asked that organisations seek permission from their colleagues for publication of their photographs in the FAWAC Annual Report 2005.

It was agreed that letter of condolence would issue to Mr R Kennedy.

Meeting concluded with Chairman thanking all present for their contribution. He also thanked FAWC UK for their very informative presentation.

Next meeting **5th October 2006 in Dublin** – please note change of date from 12th October.